

SF 3.1.3

EPA Region 10 Superfund
RELEASABLEDate 11/16/16
Initial YJS**CONFIDENTIAL**

MEMO

Date: August 16, 1990
To: The Slag Team
RE: Community Interviews in Soda Springs and Pocatello,
August 14 & 15
From: Dan Phalen & Mark Masarik

The meetings were very informative. We met with 24 people, including three Caribou County Commissioners and the Mayors of Pocatello and Soda Springs, all of whom have been invited to testify at the Symms hearing. In addition, we met with housewives, school teachers, a health care worker, farmers, small businessmen, a pharmacist, a real estate agent, laborers, a Monsanto worker, and two Monsanto managers (Kent Lott and Don Wind).

We made it clear that the meetings were confidential, that we were not technical people, and that our purpose for being there was to ask for their ideas on how to better communicate with and involve the community. Both Mark and I felt that we were able to diffuse some of the mistrust which seemed to be brewing, especially among the elected officials.

The meetings were cordial and not emotionally charged. The anxiety about the health risk is very low, even for those with concern. The economic impact remains the largest issue along with the general feeling that EPA is not sensitive to community concerns. The Q&A Fact Sheet was helpful in allaying many of these concerns. Among the issues raised, several deserve attention:

1. **The communities need technical advice now about what exactly they should be doing to remediate the problem of slag on streets, etc.** Mayor Angstet of Pocatello has begun to take remedial action to remove slag located at the airport. This is being done at considerable expense to the city. (It appears that the city may have gone to unnecessary expense to remove slag to a depth of three feet when one foot of concrete would effectively shield the slag.) The communities need advice on these matters ASAP.
2. **The issue of Slag dust and groundwater contamination are of concern.** We need to be able to better address these issues.
3. **There was an overwhelming sense from all quarters that the public meeting in June went poorly for EPA.** In general, we were seen as being condescending to the public and defensive. This opinion was expressed by people on both sides of the issue. The written material was not criticized nearly so much as our oral presentations. Virtually everyone agreed that public meetings tend to be

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confrontational and should be avoided unless absolutely necessary.

4. **EPA is seen as being defensive about the science and a number of people expressed the fear that decisions would be made without EPA looking at all the facts, studies, etc. This is hurting our credibility.**
5. **A great deal of interest was expressed in forming a Citizen's Advisory Committee in Soda Springs. Mayor Hansen has started putting together a list of people he feels would be interested in serving. We talked about the need for balance on such a committee. We made no mention of possible monetary or technical assistance.**
6. **The information repository at the library was greeted with great enthusiasm. Considerable interest was expressed in having access to other studies, including by FMC, Monsanto, Pederson, a Florida Study on Phosphate Miners, a generational study from China and others. (Reference was made to a 1986 badging study by Monsanto which revealed 50-55 mrem annual exposure to workers. Monsanto agreed to give us the study if we request it.)**
7. **There was considerable interest in purely informational meetings on risk, radiation and the like by neutral parties, ie. from Idaho State University, etc.**
8. **There is some belief that alternative aggregates from the area may also be radioactive. Concern about the cost of alternative aggregates was also expressed. We need to check this out.**
9. **Several people offered to have small group meetings in their homes. This will be especially useful in small subdivisions where all of the foundations were built of slag. (Two such sub-divisions were identified).**
10. **Serious concerns were raised about how, who and on what grounds EPA will be making it's decisions. Chuck should probably address this issue in his oral testimony.**
11. **People were concerned about the "us and them" mentality which they feel needs to be avoided. In general, they felt that EPA needs to be more open and forthcoming with information and less defensive.**
12. **The Question and Answer Fact sheet was well received, especially the provision which called for the community comment period on the proposed plan and action levels. There was great relief that we would not start home testing before setting action levels.**

Note: Many other suggestions will be incorporated into the Community Relations Plan.